Summer Observations of Deer
2002

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Abstract

The 2002 statewide fawn:doe ratio was 0.90, above the long-term (1960-2001) mean of 0.86. By region, the Northern Forest fawn:doe ratio was 0.84, above the long-term mean of 0.81 for this region. The Central Forest region fawn:doe ratio was 0.91, below the long-term mean of 0.95. The Farmlands region fawn:doe ratio was 1.0, above the long-term mean 0.96.

Methods

DNR and cooperating U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel recorded deer observations during July, August and September of 2002. Deer observed during daylight hours were recorded including month and management unit. Deer were also identified as adult bucks, does without fawns, does with one, two and three fawns, fawns without does, and unidentified. Fawns-seen-per-doe were calculated by unit group (Fig. 1).   The summer-long total of fawns and does reported was used to calculate the fawn:doe ratio for each unit group. The fawn:doe ratio calculated is probably lower than the actual ratio because observations tend to be more numerous in July when observed fawn:doe ratios are lower, rather than in August and September when fawn:doe ratios are higher.

Results

Statewide, the 2002 fawn:doe ratio of 0.90 exceeded both the 10-year (1992-2001) and long-term (1960-2001) mean of 0.87 and 0.86, respectively (Table 1). The Northern Forest (Unit Groups A-H) 2002 fawn:doe ratio of 0.84 was slightly above the 10-year and long-term mean of 0.82 and 0.81, respectively. The fawn:doe ratio of 0.91 in the Central Forest (Group L) was slightly below the 10-year and long-term mean of 0.93 and 0.95, respectively. The Farmlands (Unit Groups J, K, M, and N) fawn:doe ratio of 1.0 was slightly above the 10-year and long-term mean of 0.98 and 0.96, respectively.

Two Farmland Unit Groups (J and N) had fawn:doe ratios above the 2002 mean, while the other two Farmland Unit Groups (K and M) were slightly below the mean (Table 1). Weak correlations between observed fawn:doe ratios and other measures of herd recruitment in these Unit Groups cause us to use fixed fawn:doe values for these Groups in our population models. These fixed values are based mainly on long-term yearling doe percents as observed during the fall harvest. Summer fawn:doe observations continue in the farmlands as Study 025:Evaluation of Deer Population Monitoring and Management System, by RobertRolley and Keith McCaffery. Their study additionally explores measures for improving the deer survey and its interpretation.

Table 1. *Fawn:doe ratio by management unit groups, 1991-2002.*

									Management Unit Groups						
Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	Statewide
1991	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.89*	0.7	1.24*	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.76*	0.81
1992	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.2	0.9	0.9	1.19*	1.1	0.77
1993	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.83*	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.93
1994	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.11*	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.96
1995	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.3	0.94
1996	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.69*	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.71
1997	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.61*	0.86*	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.80
1998	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.89*	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.3	1.1	0.94
1999	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.1	0.92
2000	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.87
2001	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.84
2002	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.2	0.90
Long-term Average														
1960-2001	0.78	0.84	0.74	0.82	0.86	0.83	0.77	0.85	1.0	0.91	0.95	1.01	1.01	0.86
10-year Average														
1992-2001	0.77	0.84	0.77	0.84	0.84	0.91	0.76	0.77	0.97	0.95	0.93	1.07	1.0	0.87

*Ratios computed from samples of fewer than 100 adult does, (but more than 25).
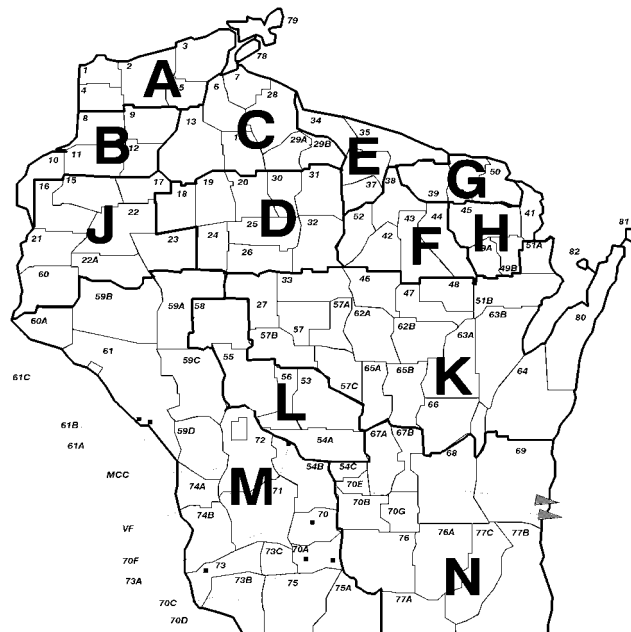

Figure 1. *Groups of deer management units used for summer deer observations.*